

Remarks/Arguments:

Various claims have been objected to because of various informalities. The claims have been appropriately amended. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested. *1/2/03*

Various claims have been rejected under 35 U.S. C. § 112, second paragraph. Regarding claim 1, this claim has been amended to recite that the column (as opposed to the first vertical axis) rotates about the second vertical axis. Regarding claim 12, this claim has been amended to remove reference to a second vertical axis. Regarding claims 13-20, the dependency of these claims has been corrected. If the dependency alone was not the basis of the rejection, Applicants' representative respectfully requests clarification of the rejection so that an appropriate amendment may be made. *2/2/03*

Withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is respectfully requested.

Claims 12, 21-29, and 44 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Montalbano et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,606,262). It is respectfully submitted, however, that these claims are now allowable for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants' invention as recited by claim 12, includes a feature which is neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record, namely:

... a cable support which moves along a third vertical axis independently of said arm unit and which supports said cable coupled to said load ...

In Montalbano, his cable support (124 a-d) must move with his arm unit, as the cable support is an integral part of the arm unit. This is in contrast with Applicant's cable support which moves independently of the arm unit. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. *Wk*

Regarding claims 21 and 44, this rejection is respectfully traversed. The Official Action is taking the position that item 120 in Montalbano (identified as being analogous to Applicants' arm unit) moves vertically along item 234 (identified as being analogous to Applicants' column). This is not correct. Item 120 in Montalbano is not capable of vertical movement relative to item 234. Item 120 only pivots relative to column 234. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection regarding claims 21 and 44 is respectfully requested.

The Official Action has also specified reasons for rejecting claims 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. These claims, however, are allowable by virtue of their dependency on allowable claim 21.

Claims 1-11, 13-20 and 43 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Holt (U.S. Patent 5,241,870) in view of Montalbano (U.S. Patent 5,606,262). It is respectfully submitted, however, that these claims are now allowable over the art of record for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants' invention, as recited by claim 1, includes a feature which is neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record, namely:

... a rotation unit for rotating said column about a second vertical axis spaced apart from the first vertical axis.

Holt neither discloses nor suggests rotating his column about another axis spaced apart from his column. Furthermore, Applicants' column is defined relative to Applicants' arm unit so that the arm unit moves along and relative to the column. Holt neither discloses nor suggests an arm unit which moves along and relative to a column wherein the column itself rotates about an axis spaced apart from the column. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over Holt.

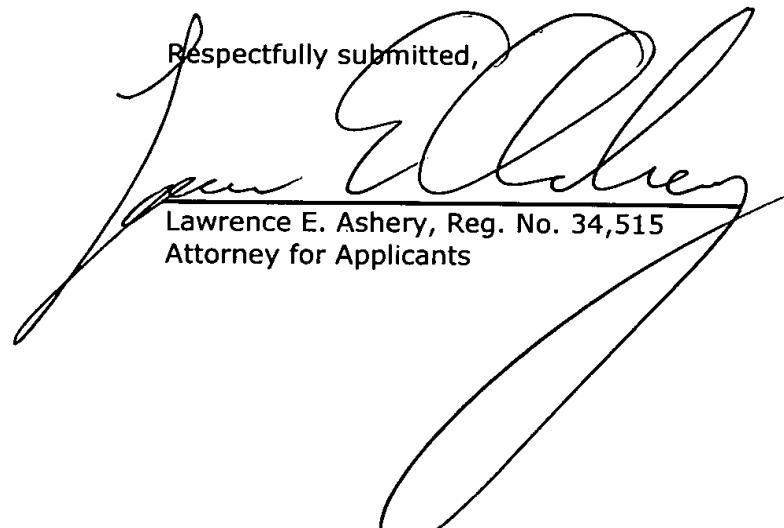
Claims 2-11 and 13-20 are patentable by virtue of the dependency on allowable independent claims.

Regarding claim 43, this claim has been amended similarly to claim 1. Accordingly, claim 43 is also patentable over the art of record for the reasons set forth above.

Applicants have added several new claims which provide further details regarding the claimed column.

In view of the amendments and arguments set forth above, the above-identified application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lawrence E. Ashery, Reg. No. 34,515  
Attorney for Applicants

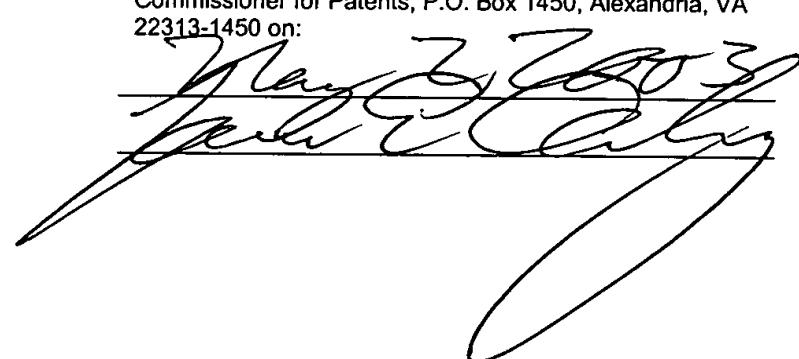
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Dated:

P.O. Box 980  
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0980  
(610) 407-0700

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